(a) whether IGNOU is launching a science channel to educate and create awareness among the students;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken particularly for rural students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) As per the information provided by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the University has started the Test Transmission of Science Channel on 23.12.2008 on Gyan Darshan (GD-2). The transmission includes programmes produced by IGNOU and also Department of Science & Technology (DST). The channel aims to share knowledge and develop a scientific temper in the public and improve the teaching and reseach of the sciences. The programmes cater to the needs of viewers of both metro and non-metro regions. Initially, the programmes are in English and Hindi. This channel is also available on Direct to Home (DTH) platform of Door Darshan (DD) Direct Plus and Dish TV.

Seats for disadvantaged children in minority schools

2546. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is unwilling to let minority schools off the hook when it comes to setting aside 25 per cent of seats for disadvantaged children; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides for the following responsibilities of schools:

(i) schools which are established, owned or controlled by the appropriate Government, or a local authority shall provide free and compulsory elementary education to all children admitted therein.

(ii) schools receiving aid or grants to meet whole or part of its expenses from the appropriate Government or local authority shall provide free and compulsory elementary education to such proportion of children admitted therein as its annual recurring aid or grants so received bears to its annual recurring expenses, subject to a minimum of 25%.

(iii) schools belonging to 'specified category' as defined in section 2 (p) of the Act, and unaided school shall admit in class I to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker 'Section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion.

Charging of exorbitant fee by schools

2547. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per norms of CBSE, no school affiliated to it should collect any fee, other than admission fee, from students;

(b) whether many schools affiliated to CBSE, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, are collecting exorbitant fee in the form of building fund or otherwise;

(c) if so, the details of such schools from A.P. and action contemplated against them;

(d) whether his Ministry has received any complaint that Navabharat School, affiliated to CBSE, at Paloncha, Khammam district, Andhra Pradesh has been collecting huge amounts as building funds, etc.; and

(e) if so, the action taken against the school?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Affiliation Bye-Laws of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) *inter-alia* prescribed the following:-

1. Fee charges of a school affiliated with the Board should be commensurate with the facilities provided by the institution.

2. Fees should normally be charged under the Heads prescribed by the Deptt. of Education of the State/U.T. for schools of different categories.

3. No capitation fee or voluntary donations for gaining admission in the school or for any other purpose should be charged/collected in the name of the school.

(b) and (c) The Board receives sporadic complaints against its affiliated private unaided schools A complaint against Meridian School for Boys and Girls, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad A.P. was received in the year 2008 and the school was directed to adhere to the Affiliation Bye-Laws.

(d) No such complaint has been received by CBSE.

(e) Does not arise.

Visva Bharati University

2548. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESROUCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that academic environment in the Visva Bharati has been witnessing sharp deterioration over the last several months, in particular, forcing virtual closure of the university for several weeks during October, 2009;

(b) if so, the reasons for the ongoing turmoil in Visva Bharati University;

(c) the steps taken, if any, - for restoration of the past glory and academic environment of this eminent seat of learning linked to Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore;

(d) whether any probe has been ordered into the conduct of the present Vice-Chancellor; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?